4: Goldstein D-5 (ca. 1930)1934
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one-quarter of the whole number have more or less of captive blood" (1898, p. 235). In 1927 Wissler tabulated 62.9 per cent of the Comanches as full-blood. It is the opinion of the writer that at present (1931) at most 10 per cent of the adults can with any assurance be considered full-blood. The Comanches themselves fully realize their almost total miscegenation.

The tribe had been subdivided into bands, the more important being Penateka, Yapa, Kwahadi, Kotsoteka, and Tanema. The first two in particular wandered south into Texas in early times, the other groups remaining north about the Arkansas River in Kansas. In the present investigation measurements were obtained on members of each of the mentioned bands, as well as on a few individuals of the Noyika band. The latter name apparently does not appear in the literature. However, Dr. Ralph Linton, of the University of Wisconsin, who recently did ethnological work among the Comanches, was kind enough to inform the writer that he too came across members of a Noyika division; he also remarks on the almost total elimination of the full-blood. The writer has not attempted to make anthropometric comparison between the various bands because of the totally inadequate numbers. Moreover, intermarriage appears to have been always indiscriminate with respect to band. At present distinction as to band seems largely lost, only the older people apparently remembering their old band affiliations.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

Although the Comanches have always been fairly numerous (7000 in 1690)[4] and an important factor in the history of the southern plains and Texas, little is reported on them ethnologically[5] and even less physically. Catlin (1842, p. 66)

[4] Mooney, J., The aboriginal population of America north of Mexico. Smiths. Misc. Coll., LXXX, no. 7, p. 13, 1928.

[5] For the linguistic classification and the history of the Comanches, see, in addition, Clark, W. P. (1885, article Comanche); Bur. Am. Ethnol. Bull. 30, ('07, '10, articles Comanche and Shoshonean); Kroeber ('06–'07, p. 97). For fuller titles see bibliography.

6: Linton E-5 (1933) 1935 NO6 Comanche NO6

and the erection of the lodge and the last four to the dance proper. When the medicine man had selected a place for the dance, invitations were sent out to the various bands. Informants knew of no formality attending this. The bands moved to the place by easy stages, always making four over night halts en route. The camp was pitched in a semi-circle about the site chosen for the lodge. The members of each band camped together, but the bands had no regular order in the circle.

When the camp has assembled, gathering of materials for the lodge was begun. Cottonwood was used for the posts and brush covering and either cottonwood or cedar for the screen inside the lodge. Men and women went out together to cut the smaller posts and brush. They wore wreaths of sage and joked and sang. When the materials had been cut they were tied to ropes and hauled back by groups of men on foot. These men usually halted four times on their way back to rest and sing.

The cutting and transportation of the center pole was left until the last. There seems to have been no ceremony attending its selection. It was cut, in various instances, by a virtuous Comanche woman (i.e., one who had always been faithful to her husband), a virtuous captive woman, and a captive man who had a number of war deeds to his credit. Although informants could give no explanation of these selections, the use of captives for this important office probably reflects their importance in the social and economic life of the tribe. The Comanche captives, who were mostly Mexicans, tended the horse herds and practiced most of the specialized industries such as gun repairing and saddle making. They were also encouraged to accompany their masters on war parties and, if brave fighters, could rise to any position open to a full blood. The captive woman who was faithful to her master or the captive man who had won war honors had behaved in a commendable way and deserved to be honored by the whole society.

The center pole itself was a tree trunk about fourteen feet long and one foot in diameter with a fork at the upper end. After it had been felled and peeled, it was carried bodily to the site of the lodge, twenty-five or thirty men bearing it by means of ropes passed under it. The bearers were changed frequently so that everyone would have a chance to help. Four stops were always made en route.

The construction of the lodge was never begun until all the materials were on the spot. The center pole was erected first, being planted in a hole two to three feet deep. The upper end was supported and guided by means of a forked sapling. Three unsuccessful attempts were made to lift it, it being set on the fourth attempt. At each attempt the medicine man blew

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
NO6 Comanche NO6

own men. It is safe to say that the wild Comanches never kept a treaty and in the matter of treaty breaking some excellent examples were set by their white neighbors.[13]

The records available—and they are exceedingly scant and unsatisfactory—indicate that the political institutions of the Comanches were meager and poorly defined. Each band had a head civil chief and a head war chief, selected by the council of chiefs and leading men. In this connection I may state that I have never seen any satisfactory account of the manner in which chiefs were selected, or any definition of just what constituted a chief. It appears that heredity was one consideration but not the only matter of determining the status of a man in the tribe. Absolutism and the idea of divine right found little consideration in a Comanche camp. The chief or head man who proved tactless, cowardly, or inefficient would soon be supplanted; but this readjustment would likely take place gradually and by common consent rather than by formal procedure.

In all matters, even war, the head civil chief was superior to his war chief, but if the civil chief was aged and decrepit and the war chief vigorous and popular this civil superiority would be more theoretical than real. Verily, among the Comanches the man made the office and not the office the man. However, the war chief was apt to be the son, natural or adopted, of the head civil chief; and the most insolent Comanche brave had respect for the council of his elders.[14]

In theory, at least, the council was supreme, but its decisions were often indefinite and left each chief or head man a large measure of freedom of action. Generally the majority made little effort to impose its will on the minority.

During the later period, custom and the concensus of opinion, public opinion, we might call it, were practically the only sanctions behind Comanche law. However, it is likely that before the tribe

13. The Spaniards often commented on the difficulty of holding the Comanches to treaties. See The Baron de Ripperda to the Viceroy, August 25, 1772, in Bolton's De Mezieres, as cited, I, 342. The Anglo-Americans found that this problem increased with the passing of the years.

14. These statements represent my own opinions based on extensive reading and study in both Spanish and English sources. The tribal practices in these matters varied if we are to reconcile the different conflicting accounts. Josiah Gregg gives the matter some consideration. See Commerce of the Prairies (New York, 1845), 306-307, in R. G. Thwaite's Early Western Travels, XX, 342-343.